

## **Frederick County Sustainability Commission**

### **Meeting Minutes for**

**6/15/16**

**FCSC Attendees:** Tom Anderson, Susan Weber, Rachel Armistead, Jennifer Bird, Robert Black, Annie Jones, Ron Kaltenbaugh, Chris May, Liz Peterson, Joe Richardson, Brad Goodman (FCSC Intern)

**OSER:** Shannon Moore

**Public:** Rich Maranto, Alysia Foyer

#### **Tour of Catoctin Mountain Orchard, provided by Bob Black**

The fruit tree density for the orchard has increased over time from 400 trees per acre to 850 trees per acre and is now being implemented at 1200 trees per acre. The denser plantings help keep the trees small, provide for increased production per acre, and facilitate fruit development and harvest. Using the Solaxe practice (French theory), the trees are helped to remain small by pruning, thinning fruit, and allowing the branches to bend over with fruit, which stops branch growth and increases fruit growth.

B-9 is the most widely used root stock, as it has some resistance to fire blight. It does need water to do well. A trickle irrigation system has been implemented at the orchard since 1979, and now covers the entire orchard. Irrigation is provided by 4 ponds that were constructed between 1961 and 1964.

A wide variety of fruits, mostly apples, are grown. The orchard provides stone fruits (cherries, plums, apricots, peaches, necto plums, and more) most of which were significantly retarded by late freezes this year. Also kiwi berries were set back by the late freezes. The orchard also grows strawberries, kale, cabbage, broccoli and other crops such as vetch that are rotated in strips between fruit trees to help with natural, organic reduction of nematodes that can hurt fruit tree root systems. About 100 acres are in fruit tree production. Apples include many varieties grown for taste, appearance and long storage capability. The Autumn Gala – Patent name Harry Black Gala, is named after Bob's father, who bought the farm from the Kelbaugh's in 1961, after helping with that operation since the 1940's. Other unique and delicious apples include the Crimson Crisp, Blondie, and Ever Crisp (cross between Figi and Honey Crisp). Pears are also grown and harvested. An excellent sustainability practice is the supply of the orchard's local fruit to Frederick County Schools.

The orchard cooperates with the USDA research laboratory in combatting invasive pests such as the brown marmorated stink bug and drosophila fruit fly. A pheromone trapping system for the stink bug was pointed out, which is used with the orchard's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practice to reduce the need for insecticide to 48 trees out of 900 in a 1 acre test plot.

Storm water control is enhanced by contour swales on the hillsides, and the use of concrete hog manure grates at gravel road crossings. Composting is a significant sustainability practice implemented on the farm, using not only farm waste, trimmings and food waste, but plant waste collected by the nearby towns of Thurmont and Emmitsburg. The compost enhances root development when used in planting, and is also used as a general soil amendment to increase soil quality.

## **Welcome**

- [The commission's formal meeting was held at the hilltop, overlooking Frederick County and Carroll County. After the meeting the tour stopped for picking of strawberries.]
- The Chair (Tom Anderson) welcomed all FCSC members and guests.
- **Election and Installation of New Commission Officers:** Tom provided an overview of the procedure for voting on and installing the next Commission officers, which will occur at the July meeting. He will call for additional nominations before the voting.
- **Departing Commission Members:** Chris May, Bob Black and Susan Weber were highlighted for their helpful contributions to the Commission as departing members at the end of June.

## **Vice Chair Items**

- **Approval of May Minutes,** moved by Jennifer Bird and seconded by Liz Peterson, was agreed to unanimously.

## **Commission Intern Perspective**

Brad Goodman provided a summary of his excellent internship supporting the commission. He is networking and looking for a job. He worked on the *E. coli* section of the Stormwater Restoration Plan and also researched sediment. There will be three vacancies coming up in the County's Office of Sustainability and Environmental Resources.

## **Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) Update**

The vice chair noted that the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing initiative proposal was approved by the County Executive. Shannon Moore will send members a copy of the approval memo. [Shannon sent the memo to members on June 17, 2016.]

## **Livable Frederick: Environment and Energy Work Group Update**

Shannon Moore reported that the work group has identified topics and resources needed. There will be an internal meeting with planning staff next week, followed by a work group meeting. How the County will meet the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs of the Stormwater Restoration Plan), renewable energy, and other sustainability aspects will be included in the Comprehensive Plan. The work group will need to bring in some outside expertise. Ron Kaltenbaugh advised that sustainability touches on everything in the Comprehensive Plan.

## **What's Next/Food Waste Update**

Joe Richardson advised that the Phase I report by the consultant GeoSyntec has been released and is on the web site. Some options have been eliminated. The report was presented to the County Council on June 7. It is a long report focused on composting food waste by distributing a third bin to residents and businesses for their use. This bin will be a six gallon bucket with a plastic bag liner to be picked up and cleaned every week. The compost will be a useful commodity, which can be sold. Perhaps a public/private partnership will be used for implementation. It might be best to have a municipality with its schools do a pilot, hopefully within the next twelve months. Within the next two to three years we can expect that everyone in the County will be recycling food waste.

Phase II of this effort will look next at costs.

Joe will pilot food waste at his summer camp, starting on Monday, June 20, 2016. He is using a hauler who will take the food waste to Prince Georges County for composting. Master Gardener Alysia Foyer talked briefly about her experience doing food waste composting at the Yellow Springs School.

Joe has been having trouble talking to the public school system and having them embrace food waste composting. A private school might be easier to get on board. When the schools do get involved, Joe urged that Commission members would be needed to help out with the education effort.

## **OSER Updates**

Shannon Moore noted several initiatives in OSER: the 150 home power saver retrofit program has begun, a Smart Energy Communities grant will provide the County with 2 more electric busses – keeping the County 1<sup>st</sup> on the Eastern Seaboard with 7 electric busses – soon to be the entire fleet.

**Commission Members Items of Interest:**

Susan Weber has been meeting with members who were nominated to be the new officers to provide them with information in preparation for transition. She described a citizen expressing a stormwater erosion concern and not knowing who to contact in County government. It's not readily apparent on the County's web site as to which office to contact. Shannon advised that Darlene Bucciero was the correct staffer in OSER to address the issue.

Rachel Armistead was introduced as a new member.

Chris May said that he was honored to have served on the Commission for the last six years and that he will be around.

Ron Kaltenbaugh highlighted the recent EV (Electric Vehicle) Gran Prix for school kids. This was the fourth year for this event with teams coming from as far away as Ohio. More girls were involved on the teams this year. They like the fact that this activity is "hands on."

**Public Comments:** None.

**Action Items:**

10-1. Focus areas for FY 2016: comprehensive planning and energy efficiency. There is now a committee to develop the Sustainability Plan, which will also work with the County's comprehensive planning process. Perhaps another committee to work on energy efficiency issues is also needed? We need to further define this in terms of outcomes as an agenda item to discuss how to move forward for a future meeting. We would need to bring in subject matter experts.

10-4. Sustainability Plan: The Committee met on 12/18/15. A presentation by Dana French on mission and vision was held for the entire Commission at its January meeting. A followup session was held at the February meeting. Shannon will send FCSC members a link to the sustainably based American Planning Association document being used for the comprehensive plan process. Once the comp plan is completed, we will be able to call out the sustainability elements, which will then be assembled as our Sustainability Plan.

10-8. County Green Teams: Need to assemble a comprehensive list that includes all municipalities with teams and contact information shown. FCSC to send a letter inviting liaisons from the teams to attend FCSC meetings. Ron K. has started a list and has been attending City of Frederick Green Team meetings. **Ongoing.**

10-10. FCSC committees: Invite community volunteers to join. We need to come up with an approach to accomplish this. Solicit comments from public on web site. A joint

Commission mailbox is possible, but there are problems accessing it from Apple devices. Future agenda item.

5-1. Sustainability Event in the fall. This would be a free meeting open to the public. It needs to be well planned three months in advance for October. Rachel will be on the work group with Tom.

**Adjournment:** Following a motion, which was seconded and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at 3:35 pm. The meeting continued for Joe Richardson's report following the tour from approximately 4:15 until 4:45.